

# Rare Plants of Louisiana



## *Echinochloa polystachya* - river grass, mudflat millet Grass Family (Poaceae)

**Rarity Rank:** S2/G5

	1	2	3	4	5
State					
Global					
	imperiled		rare		secure

### Range:

- FL, LA, TX
- Extends from Cuba into the Tropics

### Recognition:

- A perennial millet species with long creeping rhizomes (all of our other millets are annuals) with a tendency to form dense colonies; plants to 1.5 m tall
- Inflorescence a contracted panicle with short branches, appearing spike-like from a distance; panicle can be slightly nodding
- Blades and sheaths are glabrous with ciliate margins
- Ligule (found at junction of blade and sheath on the upper surface) is a dense row of yellow hairs 2 to 4 mm long (ligule absent in our other millet species)
- Lemmas awned with awns to 2 cm long



USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Hitchcock, A.S. (rev. A. Chase). 1950. *Manual of the grasses of the United States*. USDA Misc. Publ. No. 200. Washington, DC.

**Flowering Time:** April to October

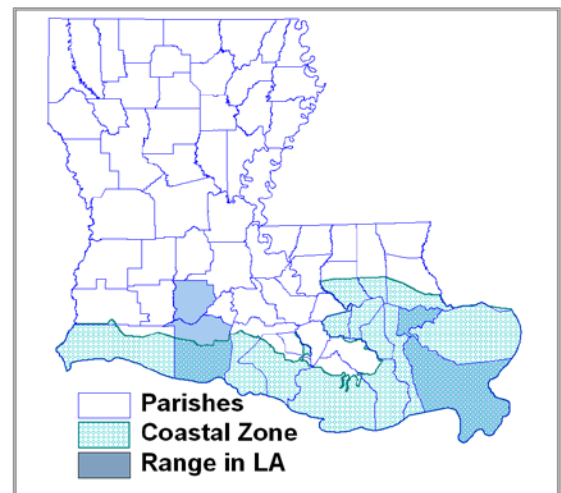
**Light Requirement:** Full sun

### Wetland Indicator Status:

OBL – almost always in wetlands

### Habitat:

Freshwater marshes and mudflats; collected in 1930s at Delta National Wildlife Refuge, Plaquemines Parish. Recent records have been from rice fields and crawfish ponds in southwest Louisiana.



### Threats:

- Subsidence/changes in hydrology, especially increases in water depth
- Invasive species e.g. non-native strains of *Phragmites australis* which is abundant near the terminus of the Mississippi River

### Beneficial Management Practices:

Conduct survey work at Mississippi and Atchafalaya River Deltas

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**LA River Basins:** Pontchartrain, Mississippi, Barataria, Vermilion-Teche, Mermentau



Specimen images courtesy of LSU Herbarium. Note the narrow contracted panicles and spikelet awns

## References:

Allen, C. M., D. A. Newman, and H. Winters. 2004. Grasses of Louisiana, 3rd ed. Allen's Native Ventures, LLC., Pitkin, LA. 374 pp.

NatureServe. 2007. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 6.2. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>.

Stutzenbaker, C. D. 1999. Aquatic and wetland plants of the western Gulf Coast. Texas Parks and Wildlife Press. 465 pp.

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For more information, please visit our Web pages at

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